

[you've got a pizza my heart](#) by honeycombkiss

Series: [waited just to love you](#) [7]

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: 5 + 1 Things, Aged-Up Characters (16/17 years old), Alternate Universe - High School, Baseball Player Bill Denbrough, Ben Hanscom Loves Beverly Marsh, Ben Hanscom runs track, Beverly Marsh & Richie Tozier Are Best Friends, Beverly and Richie are smoking buddies, Bill Denbrough & Richie Tozier Are Best Friends, Eddie Kaspbrak is low-key Clingy, Junior Year of High School, M/M, Mike Hanlon is the best, Post-Pennywise (IT), Richie Tozier & Stanley Uris Are Best Friends, Richie Tozier is a Good Friend, Spring 1993, Teenage Losers Club (IT), Track Star Eddie Kaspbrak, although no one forgets or moves away because that's bullshit, if the losers club were turned into a gay comedy romcom that played on nick at nite, kind of feels and reads like a sitcom

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Wentworth Tozier, Beverly's aunt

Relationships: Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Minor Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh - Relationship

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Summary:

Richie's got a new job delivering pizza, Eddie doesn't want him to go, Stan doesn't believe in him, Bill needs a friend, Ben's always worrying about nothing, Beverly always does her best, and Mike is the kindest handyman. And Eddie's a not-so-secret clingy lover. Richie had thought having the Loser's deliver with him would be a great help, but soon discovers he's the one doing most of the helping.

Or 5 times Richie's friends came along to deliver pizza and party with him, plus the 1 time it all went to shit.

you've got a pizza my heart

Author's Note:

Welcome! Thank you for clicking on this little work from my heart. I hope you enjoy!

Just a little disclaimer: None of the opinions in this fic are necessarily mine but are there for the sole purpose of storytelling.

Richie couldn't focus on the math textbook that sat in front of him. Instead, he continued to spin and spin around on the barstool at his kitchen counter. The numbers kept mixing up in his head, until a song would get stuck in his head and he'd have to play out the guitar solo in the air. He tried to stay focused, but it felt pretty impossible.

Whenever he started playing his pretend guitar though, Stan—who sat beside him—would huff and jab Richie with his elbow. Richie would squawk in indignance and they'd both go back to what they were doing. They had it nearly down to a science. Stan was busy flipping through a book he had to read for English. He had sticky notes extruding out the sides, marking pages and passages. Richie had already tried to distract him twice and was currently waiting for a bit of time to pass before he tried again.

Richie turned back to his math textbook, though the numbers looked like they were jumping off the page and mocking him. His mind couldn't settle down. He finally slammed the book down. He'd decided to work on it before class in the morning.

There was a thump from inside the garage, just on the other side of the kitchen wall. Richie turned to look at the door that led to their garage, his dad's form slipped through only moments later. He was dressed in his scrubs and white coat, his black rubber shoes squeaking against the tile floor.

"Hey, Rich, Stanley," Wentworth Tozier greeted the pair. Richie answered with a mock salute, while Stan gave a pleasant,

“Good evening, Mr. Tozier.”

“What’s the plan for dinner?” Wentworth asked as he shuffled around the kitchen opening and closing cupboards.

“I was thinking of ordering pizza,” Richie said. “From that new pizza place that opened in town.”

Stan jumped slightly when Went snapped his fingers and let out an, “Aha!”

“Um, what?” Richie asked, throwing his dad a look.

“I have this new client, and I was telling him about you,” Wentworth answered, pulling an apple out of the basket in the middle of the kitchen island.

“Um, thank you?” Richie said. “But why?”

“It’s kind of a long story,” Went said, and Richie groaned loudly. His father was a slow storyteller, taking the time to add every little detail that really wasn’t necessary. Richie did not have the patience for a story like that. “Richard,” Went chided lightly. “You’ll like this story.”

“I really don’t think I will,” Richie disagreed.

“No, seriously, Rich, I think I got you a job.” Richie’s head snapped up, finally focusing in on his father’s form. His father took a loud bite of the crunchy apple and smiled around it. “I knew you’d be interested.” Went laughed.

“Can I get the short version of the story, though?” Richie pleaded. “If you love your son, you’ll give him the short version.”

Wentworth laughed. “Alright. Well, basically, the guy that opened that new pizza place is one of my clients. He actually came in today for a cleaning. It’s funny, actually, because I’ve known him for quite a while. He’s always been a nice guy, and he’s got these two young daughters who I’ve always had the pleasure of—”

“Father, I’m begging you!” Richie cut him off, clasping his hands

against his chest, raising them up to the sky in a mock prayer.

“Okay, fine,” Went laughed. “Basically, he’s looking to hire some young adults as delivery guys for the establishment, and so I recommended you. I told him my son has a nice, reliable car and he’s got a lot of positive energy. That’s important in the job world, Rich.”

“Holy shit, are you serious?” Richie jumped out of his seat.

“You’ve been moaning,” at Wentworth’s words Richie blanched. “Richard.” Went shook his head, taking another bite of his apple before continuing. “You’re always complaining about wanting money, but you refuse to come down to my dentistry-”

“Because it’s horrible!” Richie exclaimed. “I refuse to do it *again*. I only did it last time because I was desperate for money for me and Eds’ anniversary.”

“He’s right, though, Richie,” Stan cut in, looking up from the book in his lap. “You’re always whining about money.”

“I am not!” Richie argued, spinning on his stool to face Stan.

“Yes, you are.” Stan said, fixing him with a glare. “Just last week you made Bill pay your part-”

“That’s enough out of you!” Richie cut him off swiftly, eyes widening. Wentworth wasn’t a very strict father, but Richie really didn’t want Stan telling him about their weed smoking.

“Or what about McDonalds?” Stan added, as if Richie hadn’t stopped him.

“And hot dates with my man,” Richie agreed, wagging his eyebrows. Stan fake barfed.

“That’s the right idea!” Wentworth cut in, smiling broadly. “But you’ve got to promise me you won’t fuck this up. I can’t have you making a mess. I clean this man’s teeth every six months.”

“I’ll be *so* responsible.” Stan snorted, so Richie shot him a glare.

“Well great,” Wentworth slapped Richie’s shoulder, smiling at him. “I thought you’d say that. You start on Monday. You’ve got to clean out your car, too, Richie, because that thing is disgusting.”

1

Eddie’s bed was tiny and cramped, but with Eddie laying his head against Richie’s chest and their legs tangled underneath some blankets it wasn’t terrible. They had a pair of headphones laying between them, soft, staticky music playing from it. Eddie’s mom had already gone to bed for the night—it was only six thirty, but Eddie said she’d taken like four sleeping pills before slipping into her bedroom for the night—and they didn’t want to wake her up.

Eddie’s math homework rested against Richie’s left leg and Eddie’s right. Eddie’s hair was mused up, standing wild. He had been ripping on it earlier when he couldn’t figure out the math problem.

“I still don’t fucking get it,” Eddie grumbled, turning his eyes up to Richie’s. “You should just do it for me.”

“I already said I would, Eddie Confetti,” Richie reached for it again, like he’d done twenty minutes prior.

“No! You can’t do that, I’ll feel too guilty,” Eddie snatched at it again. “Plus, if I can’t even do the homework there’s no way in hell I’ll be able to pass the exam. This is so fucked up.”

“We can walk through it again,” Richie offered, clearing his throat. He was working on his college professor voice.

“No more of that fucking voice, Richie,” Eddie snapped. “You’ve never even heard a college professor speak before, and I’m pretty sure they don’t sound like a pedophilic gym teacher.”

Richie gasped. “Eddie! My voice is distinguished!”

Eddie shook his head. Richie leaned over to tug at the hair curled around his ear, when his eyes caught the time displayed on the alarm clock on Eddie’s nightstand.

“Shit, I gotta go, Spagh-Eds.” He attempted to throw his legs over Eddie’s side and climb off the bed, but Eddie clung to him tightly.

Richie chuckled. “You gotta let me go, baby.”

Eddie’s answer was the tightening of his arms.

Richie fell to his spot back in the bed, and Eddie gave a satisfied smile. Richie tried to make a break for it, but Eddie was too quick and agile. His track practice was proving to be useful as his reflexes were much quicker than they ever had been.

“Eddie!” Richie whined.

“I don’t want you to leave,” Eddie grumbled under his breath, though Richie caught the words just as he knew Eddie had intended.

“Baby,” Richie cooed. “I don’t want to leave you either.”

“Then don’t go,” Eddie mumbled again. “Stay and I’ll make it worth it,” Eddie spoke louder yet lower this time, biting at his lower lip in the way that drove Richie crazy. And while it was all very tempting, Richie was determined to do a good job. He wanted to prove to his dad that he was capable. Plus, he *really* wanted the paycheck.

“No can do, buckaroo,” Richie spoke in his cowboy Voice, leaning over to bite at Eddie’s earlobe. “Why don’t you just come with?”

“No way!” Eddie shook his head vehemently. “You have to go do your job!”

“Oh come on,” Richie rolled his eyes. “It’s like the worlds easiest job ever. I roll up, I grab a box of pizza and I roll across to some Derry crack house or bachelor pad or-”

“I get it, Rich, lots of people in Derry.”

“So come on! Come meet the lovely people of Derry, Eds.”

“No thanks,” Eddie grumbled. “You’ll get fired or something and I don’t want all that guilt and pressure on me.”

“You’re being ridiculous!” Richie said. “You’ll just sit there, looking gorgeous and keeping me company. You wouldn’t want your man bored and lonely, would you?”

Eddie sighed. “Richie, stop. You know it’s a bad idea. You know the rules. Didn’t you sign some contract? What if they called the police?”

“Oh my god,” Richie laughed. “Don’t be so paranoid, Eds. The worst they could do is fire me.”

Eddie just crossed his arms against his chest, looking unconvinced.

“Fine,” Richie rolled his eyes. “You stay here; bored and alone. But I’ve got to go be bored and alone at work.”

Eddie allowed Richie to finally climb over him. Richie stood tall, stretching his arms above his head. He watched gleefully as Eddie stared at the exposed skin between his rucked-up t-shirt and low sitting jeans.

Richie shoved his feet into his classic checkerboard Vans and grabbed his jacket off of Eddie’s desk chair. Eddie didn’t move, still glaring down at his lap. It wasn’t unusual; Eddie felt emotions at an extreme level. No doubt he was festering in his anguish, wanting to blame Richie but knowing he couldn’t. Richie understood. Eddie was kind of an adorable little gremlin. It was just part of his charm.

“Bye, Spagh-Eds,” Richie waved dopily, before blowing him a kiss. Eddie finally glanced up, raking his eyes up and down Richie’s body before going slack against his pillows and blowing a kiss of his own. Although it was a grumpy looking kiss, Richie still pretended to catch it and shove it down the front of his pants. It had the desired effect of making Eddie break out into a giggle, all the while rolling his eyes.

“You’re ridiculous,” Eddie said, though Richie had long since learned it was code for, *‘you’re hilarious and I’m madly in love with you and your hot bod’*.

“Love you, too, Eds.” Richie leaned over to press a chaste kiss against Eddie’s lips. Richie tried to pull away, but Eddie had already wrapped his arms around Richie’s neck, holding him close and pressing harder

against Richie's lips. It was a classic trick, but Richie wasn't falling for it. He yanked away from Eddie's strong grip, heading towards the window.

They shared one last lingering look, before Richie pulled the window open and ducked his head underneath it. It wasn't a far jump once he'd scaled the wall a bit. He'd mastered this in sixth grade, so it wasn't anything now that he was taller and more experienced.

Just as he landed in the Kaspbrak's yard below, a pair of shoes came falling out of the window, thumping into the grass at his feet. Richie looked up in surprise, finding a tiny little Eddie sneaking out of his bedroom window.

"Wait for me!" Eddie called, scrambling to find his footing. Eddie, too, had done it a hundred times by now; they were old pros.

Richie had to hide his laughter, knowing Eddie wouldn't appreciate it in his current state.

"Not one word, Tozier!" Eddie called down, sliding down the brick wall and finally landing beside Richie. He had a sweet smile on his feature, his hair still tousled all around him.

Richie mimed zipping his lips shut and tossing away the key. Eddie smiled fondly, before leaning down to slip on his shoes and begin walking towards the sidewalk. Richie had parked around the block, having to hide his car from Mrs. Kaspbrak and any nosey neighbors. They walked side by side, until his car came into view.

As the pair rolled into bed that night, Eddie wrapping his body around Richie's, Richie decided that it was a million times better going on his pizza runs with a buddy. Especially an adorable, sassy little buddy.

shoved into a warming bag that was supposed to sit in the passenger seat but had been shoved into the backseat. Bill sat in the passenger seat that night. He'd begged Richie to pick him up after his baseball practice seeing as he did not have a car of his own.

(The Denbrough's were well off, but they were stingy mother fuckers who basically loved to forget they even had a son. Or at least that was how the Losers understood it. Bill rarely complained, but Richie could tell. It was in the words he didn't say, and the smiles that never quite met his eyes.)

Richie didn't mind being the chauffeur for the group, but now it meant the Losers had to wait until he had time between pizza delivery runs to get driven home. Bill's Derry High baseball cap hung low on his head, casting shadows against his face. His grey eyes were stormy, his anger rolling off him in waves. He'd been stressed out lately, and it seemed it had all come to a boiling point.

"My fu-fu-fucking coach," Bill was cussing, fists balled in his lap. "He-he was p-p-pissed at someone ab-bout something fu-fucking st-stupid and so we all had to r-run lapssss."

"That sounds fucking terrible, but isn't that kind of necessary in *sports*?" Which was precisely why sports sounded horrible.

"I'm the f-fucking p-p-pitcher, Rich! I don't need to ru-run!"

"But I bet you looked so cute doing it, Big Bill." Richie teased.

"Th-th-that's n-not the *p-point*!" Bill said, and Richie allowed his mistake to slip—Bill hadn't corrected Richie's comment about his looks. "I c-can't d-do it anymore."

Richie figured Bill must've been pretty desperate if he was ranting at Richie. He was probably the worst person to come to, in his own opinion. Bev was calm and full of easy solutions. Ben was a great listener, all sympathetic looks and little noises of understanding. Mike's kindness was endless, always followed with a big hug.

Richie had Voices, movie quotes and good music.

"Who can't you do?!" Richie pretended to be scandalized. Bill

chuckled.

“I’m s-s-ser-rious, Ruh-rich.” Bill swatted at him playfully.

“Me too!” Richie squawked. “Maybe that’s the problem, Billiam. Maybe you should get some.”

Bill took Richie’s joking suggestion in stride, just shaking his head fondly at Richie. Bill slept around plenty enough; everyone knew that.

“It’s wh-wh-whatever,” Bill finally huffed, clenching his fists at his stuttering no doubt. “Th-th-th-th-” Bill groaned, throwing his head back. When he got worked up like this, Richie knew, his stuttering was nearly unmanageable. Richie could see him bite his tongue, as if punishing it into obedience. “Thanks, by the way. This is suh-so much bett-t-tter than riding Silver after puh-practice. My legs always feel like j-jelly.”

Bill reached over and turned the radio volume up. He spun the little dial until Richie’s tape was blasting into the car. Bill didn’t mind what cassette tape Richie chose, but he was picky about the song that was playing. Once he finally settled on a song, though, the pair began banging their heads to the beat. Hair flopping in their eyes,

Today it was *The Cure*. Bill loved *The Cure* almost as much as Richie did.

As the music played, Bill got into the music. Bill was *cool*, Richie thought. He was the pitcher on the Derry High varsity baseball team. And he was friendly. He was a great leader and friend, but he was also a massive *dork*. A massive dork who was currently strumming an air guitar, a look of pure concentration on his face.

Richie loved seeing Bill look this carefree. It wasn’t like when he was on the field at the pitcher’s mound, eyebrows furrowed and body stiff. But more like he was when he rode Silver down a large hill, wind billowing in his hair. He looked kind of at peace.

“I l-l-love this song!” Bill called over the music, stumbling on the space between the last two words he spoke. The s sounded like a hiss.

Or a low whistle.

“Me too!” Richie called over *Inbetween Days*.

“We sh-should get *so* high this week-kend.” Bill yelled again, not bothering to turn the music down. “Like high enough that we don’t know our own n-n-names!”

“Fuck yeah!” Richie wasn’t sure where the idea came from, but he wasn’t going to argue. Bill drank when his home life was unmanageable and he drank when his team won a game. Richie didn’t think it really mattered either way. Because forgetting was forgetting no matter what you called it or what caused it.

They delivered to Bev’s old apartment building sometime later. Richie’s four-hour shift was nearly halfway through and there was finally a lull in deliveries. After Richie ran the order up to 6B there would be time to swing by the Denbrough’s suburban home and drop Bill off for the night. Richie had explained as much before he slipped out of the car and towards the building. Terrible memories were paired with this place, and the stench in the hallways was intense. He plugged his nose as he climbed the stairs.

He received a small tip, before racing back down the stairs and back into the fresh air. He gasped for air, letting the crisp breeze fill his lungs. The place wreaked like cigarettes, and while Richie did smoke occasionally, this stench was nearly unbearable.

His car was empty when he got back down to it. He looked around in confusion, before he spotted Bill on a payphone across the street. He was just hanging up the phone when he spotted Richie. He waved enthusiastically before jogging back over.

“I’m st-st-starv-ving,” Bill said as way of explanation. “Ordered us a p-p-p-pizza,” he walked back to Richie’s car, throwing open the passenger’s door. “G-g-gave my addr-ress. Bu-but we’ll just eat it ourselves.”

“Big Bill!” Richie cheered. “Mastermind extraordinaire strikes again!”

Bill just smiled, as if he knew how true Richie's statement actually was.

"I ord-d-dered ch-cheese st-ticks, too." Bill told him as Richie shoved the keys back into the ignition. The music came on loudly, causing the pair to jump. Neither had bothered to turn it down before they'd turned off the car. They both broke into laughter.

Richie watched as Bill took his baseball cap off, fingers playing loosely with his fringe. It was matted together with sweat, red streaks catching the last of the evening's sunlight. He smiled at Richie easily, something about it forever comforting.

Richie didn't say anything more, just pulled back onto the road and back to the parlor.

Their pizza was finally ready after another trip across town.

"I can't believe it's finally our turn," Richie moaned around a bite of a garlic cheese stick. Richie was sure it was melting in his mouth. He was sure he was salivating.

"Are you m-making love to it, Ruh-richie?" Bill joked, eyes sparkling with mirth.

"You know you're turned on now, Big Bill," Richie teased, flickering his gaze up and down Bill's body in a crude way.

Bill laughed, "R-r-right."

"You know, I drive around almost every afternoon with these pizzas and my car like fucking wrecks of pizza and grease and I never get to even taste it!" Richie attempted to lick the aforementioned grease off of his fingers and spin the wheel simultaneously. It went smoother than he expected.

"T-to-to Richie!" Bill raised his slice of pizza, jamming it against the cheese stick that Richie was currently holding. Richie was pretty sure he could see grease drip into their laps. It was kind of awesome. Sticky fingers and greasy palms.

“It’s like the after party to our amazing show we just performed at like Madison Square Garden.”

Sometimes he and Bill played this game. The game didn’t really have a name; sometimes they called it *Zap!* and other times it was *that make-believe different future game*.

“Z-z-zap!” Bill said, already putting on what Richie called his ‘*creative face*’. Bill’s active imagination and affinity for writing and drawing paired with Richie’s overactive hyperactivity and excessive voices made the game always interesting.

Richie messed with the curls at the nape of his neck, pushing his glasses up the bridge of his nose. He was a Rockstar tonight, coming off the stage after a show full of a particularly enthusiastic crowd. Bill shoved the entire crust of his pizza into his mouth, dusted his hands off on his thighs and pretended to hold a notebook in his lap.

“Ruh-ruh-richie Tozier,” Bill winced slightly at his awful stuttering, but Richie paid it no mind. “C-can I get a word for R-r-rolling Stones ma-magazine?”

Richie did his best ‘*I’m already way too high for this interview*’ face and turned to Bill. “Make it quick, darling, I’ve got some groupies waiting for me backstage.”

“C-can I qu-qu-quote you on th-that?” Bill smirked.

“Is this interview going to be about my music or my sex life?” Richie spoke in his best asshole Rockstar voice, which included laughing at himself.

“I g-get it,” Bill nodded, pretending to write something down on his nonexistent notepad. “Wh-what was your inspiration for the song *All Night Fucking?*” Richie tried not to break character and laugh at Bill’s outrageous song title. Richie wondered what the song would sound like, though somehow knowing it would probably be pretty badass.

“The title’s a little self-explanatory don’t you think?” Richie play-scoffed. “It’s just kind of my lifestyle. Could’ve been my twenty-first birthday, could’ve been last Thursday, you know?”

“Sh-sh-sure,” Bill said, whispering under his breath and pretend-writing, “*K-kind of arrog-gant.*” Richie held back another laugh.

“Did you say something, darling?” Richie asked and Bill did laugh.

“N-nothing. One last qu-question.”

“Anything,” Richie said loftily.

“Where do yo-yo-you see yourself th-this time next y-year?”

Richie did his best smirk. “You’ll have to wait and see, won’t you?” He ended with what he was sure was a sultry wink.

The pair broke into laughter. Richie felt suddenly grateful that they hadn’t outgrown this silly game. It was nice to have a friend from forever ago, one that knew exactly how you thought.

Bill picked up another slice of pizza and passed one to Richie when he merely stuck out his hand. Bill chose another song, and the mock concert resumed. Easy as that.

3

Richie slapped out the beat of the song playing from the radio onto the steering wheel of his car. He’d been waiting for Eddie and Ben for nearly ten minutes now. Richie really didn’t mind—he loved cruising the Losers around and rocking to the radio. His new work schedule, though, made carting the Losers around a bit more difficult.

Finally, fifteen or so minutes later than normal, Eddie and Ben came racing towards his car. They wore their matching track team wind-breaker-style jackets. Ben wore his with jeans, though Eddie had paired his with his infamous little shorts. Richie wanted to both roll his eyes and bite Eddie’s thighs.

The pair came hurtling into the car, emotions rolling off of them. Ben looked apologetic and frantic, though Eddie had a bright, easy smile across his face. Eddie slid into the passenger seat, leaning across the console to greet Richie with a chaste kiss. Richie vaguely heard Ben

slide into the back, though he was preoccupied with kissing Eddie back.

“Took you two long enough,” Richie said when the pair finally pulled apart, switching his car out of park and pulling away from Derry High.

“Oops, sorry, Rich,” Eddie’s voice was full of mock innocence, his eyelashes batting against the tops of his cheekbones delicately. His hair was wet and he fiddled with the ends of it. “The shower took forever to warm up, and then I forgot my soap in my track bag. Ben had to go find it in my locker for me, and yeah,” he shrugged, and Richie wanted to laugh at the way Eddie played with the ends of his hair and avoided making eye contact with Richie. For someone who lied to his mother at least ten times a day, he sure was lousy at lying to Richie. Richie could tell now that it was most likely all part of Eddie’s master plan—the clingy little thing.

“I was ready twenty minutes ago,” Ben said. “Don’t you have work tonight, Richie?”

“Oh shit, was that tonight?” Eddie asked, widening his eyes when he glanced over at Richie, who was clearly dressed in his uniform.

Richie could only laugh—a loud guffaw—in response.

“What?!” Eddie asked incredulously.

“You’re not slick, Eddie,” Richie teased, leaning over to poke at Eddie’s side. “You knew I had to deliver tonight!”

“I totally forgot.” Eddie said, crossing his arms.

“*Sure*,” Richie sang the word, elongating each of the letters. “We believe you, right, Ben?”

Ben only smiled and shook his head.

“What do you think I’m supposed to do now?” Richie asked, mostly because he wanted to know what Eddie would say. Richie was secretly happy to have them both along; it got lonely delivering alone.

“Well what’d you do last week, when Bill ran late?” Eddie pressed. Richie laughed loudly again, unable to hold back.

“You fucking talked to Bill, huh?! That’s what gave you this brilliant idea!”

“No!” Eddie exclaimed. “I heard him telling Stan at lunch, that’s all.”

“Why didn’t you just say you wanted to come?” Richie asked. “You know I don’t care if you come.”

Ben coughed, though one word was easily heard between the coughs, “pride.”

Eddie whipped around in his seat to lightly slap at Ben’s knee. “Not true!”

“Sorry, Ben, looks like grumpy pants trapped you two with me for the night. But don’t worry, pretty soon it’ll smell like scrumptious pizza you’re not even allowed to eat.”

“Scrumptious?” Eddie raised his eyebrows. “Wow, big word.”

“You know what they say about people who you use big words,” Richie joked, though both Eddie and Ben shook their heads at him. “It means you’ve got a big dick.”

“Nobody says that.” Eddie said, just as Ben said,

“I’ve never heard that.”

Richie hummed, and then nodded his head. “It’s totally a saying.”

“You totally made it up,” Eddie mocked him, but he looked so damn cute doing it Richie could only smile.

Although it might be annoying for Ben, Richie was more than happy to have them along for the ride. Eddie was not so secretly in agreement. Richie looked up into the rearview mirror to check Ben’s features. He had a content little smile on his face, nodding along to the music, eyes tracking the houses whipping by outside the window. It was a nippy night, and so the budding leaves on the trees blinked

in the breeze.

Richie reached across the console to lace his fingers with Eddie's. From the corner of his eye, Richie could see the attempted hidden gleam in Eddie's features. It was obvious in the glittery caramel of his iris' and the twist of his lips. Richie could read him easily. He wasn't easily surprised by Eddie anymore, except when he jumped in his seat, turning slightly to look at Ben.

"Wait, Ben I just remembered," Eddie said. "Weren't you trying to ask me something in the locker room?"

Ben instantly went beat red, a blush flushing his cheeks. "Oh, uh, it was nothing."

"Benjamin!" Richie exclaimed. "My interest is piqued; you can't just leave me hanging!"

"Technically Eddie is leaving you hanging because I really didn't bring this up nor do I really want to talk about it."

Both Eddie and Richie flipped around to stare at Ben at exactly the same moment, bashing heads as they went.

"Holy *shit*," Richie winced, as Eddie shouted,

"What the *fuck*, Richie?!"

Ben just broke into laughter. Richie rubbed at his head, having to turn back to look at the road in front of them. He'd gotten momentarily distracted, but it was no matter. They were delivering to one of Richie's neighbors, so he knew the route like the back of his hand.

"Come on, Ben," Eddie was prying now. "I was distracted earlier, but I really did want to help."

"I know," Ben said. "But I was feeling confident then, y'know, runners high?"

"Watching Eddie run makes me feel high too, Ben, don't sweat it," Richie said, without missing a beat. Eddie gave a shocked gasp,

bashing his shoulder against Richie's own. But Richie could tell he didn't really mind the joke.

Ben just groaned. "You know that's not what I meant."

"Please accept my humble apology, ole chap," Richie really wasn't sorry. "Go ahead, Benny-boy, do share."

"It's just," Ben paused, glancing down at his hands in his lap. "I'm just worried about Bev and I?"

"Why? What happened?!" Eddie asked just as Richie stumbled out,

"She didn't say anything about this to me!"

"She didn't?!" Ben chose to answer Richie, glancing up to his gaze in the rearview mirror.

"No!" Richie said. "She was talking about some date you two are going on this weekend."

"Oh, okay," Ben nodded.

"Okay?!" Eddie looked very upset. "What do you mean, *okay*?!"

"Just that," Ben said. "It's okay."

"Are things not okay, but you don't want to say that so you're just lying to us?!"

"Whoa, Eddie, calm down," Ben said, though Richie could tell he instantly regretted it. Once Eddie was worked up, he really struggled to calm down. And telling him to really made things worse.

"What the *fuck*, Ben?!" Eddie turned around to face him fully. "You're not sure if everything's okay with Bev but you want *me* to calm down?!"

"What happened?" Richie chose to ignore Eddie and hopefully get to the root of the problem. Maybe Beverly hadn't said anything because she still thought things were okay. Maybe something had happened and Beverly didn't feel like talking about it just yet? Richie was shit

at advice, but he still felt the need to at least *try*.

“Nothing happened,” Ben said. “I’m just worried that she’s not happy or that like, she’s bored, y’know?”

“Is the sex really that bad?” Richie asked, earning him two identical glares.

“Shut up, Richie,” Ben and Eddie said in unison.

“It’s not that at all,” Ben shook his head.

“So it’s super good then?”

“I really don’t want to talk about Bev and I’s sex life with you two right now.”

“Sex is not the problem, dully noted,” Richie pretended to check off a box on a list in midair.

Ben just groaned. “No, Richie, it’s not about sex.”

“Hold that thought,” Richie said, pulling into the driveway of Mr. and Mrs. Turner, the neighbors with the chaotic little puppy who constantly shit in the Tozier’s yard. His mother not so secretly hated them. Hopefully that little fact wouldn’t deter them from tipping Richie.

The transaction was quick, the puppy only yipped at his ankles and they gave him an okay tip.

He slipped back into the car, finding Ben and Eddie continuing to talk about the maybe not-so-problem in Ben’s love life.

“Uh! Not fair!” Richie pitched his voice high. “You were like supposed to wait for me!”

“Tell him, Richie,” Eddie said, ignoring Richie’s comment. “Tell Ben that Beverly does really like him.”

“Of course, she does! A blind man could see it.”

“Thanks, guys,” Ben said, though he didn’t sound convinced. Richie wasn’t sure if he should push; he didn’t want to embarrass Ben. But he also didn’t want Ben to think that Richie was merely saying it to placate him. Anyone really could see that Bev and Ben were soulmates. It was in the way they touched, the lingering looks they shared, the happiness that exuded them when they were together. It would be impossible to miss. But somehow Richie understood how Ben felt; as if you weren’t good enough to deserve someone that wonderful.

“Don’t just take it from us, Benjamin,” Richie said. “Just ask Bev.”

“I know I’m worrying about nothing,”

“That’s not what I said!” Richie raised his hand to lean back and poke at Ben’s knee with all the gusto he could muster. “I meant that just ask Bev and she’ll tell you that she’s madly in love with you, she thinks your hot, the sex is great-”

“Shut up, Richie,” Ben and Eddie said again, this time slightly out of sync.

“That was so close to being so perfect. A+ for effort,” Richie snickered.

“Gee, thanks,” Eddie joked, before turning to face Richie. “You’re not going to believe what happened at practice, Rich.”

4

Richie blew out a cloud of smoke, watching as it filled the air around them. He passed the blunt to his side, letting go as Beverly took grasp. The little bag of weed sat on the coffee table in front of them, promising them an exciting night in. He hadn’t yet smoked enough to really feel anything more than slightly buzzed and blissed out. Mostly, he felt hyperaware of Beverly’s arm against his elbow, and the sound of her humming. There was also the sound of keys jiggling in the front door, and the heavy feeling of his jacket sleeves and hood.

“Hello, you two,” Beverly’s Aunt Catherine came through the front door, closing it behind her. She had two large potted plants in her grasp, which was not the oddest thing Richie had ever seen her with. Once, she’d come home with a turtle in a little habitat. “Wanna order some pizza? Maybe a cute delivery boy will bring it by.” She winked at the two of them. “Also, Bev, honey-”

“Fuck!” Richie cut her off, as her words slowly began to make sense in his mind. His normally quick reflexes were diminished in his buzzed state. “Fucking fuck shit!”

“Everything okay, Rich?” Aunt Catherine asked, eyebrows furrowed.

“Fuck!” He just yelled again, scrambling to his feet. “What day and time is it!?”

“How much have you two been smoking!?” Aunt Catherine asked in alarm.

“Seriously, Cece!” Richie addressed her, desperation in his voice.

“Uh, it’s Thursday evening, it’s gotta be like,” she went into the kitchen to glance at the clock on the stove. “Yeah, it’s five ‘til five.”

“Fucking shit,” Richie cursed again, zooming across the room to start tying up his orange chucks. “I’m so fired.”

“Uh, care to explain what’s going on?” Beverly asked from her perch still on the couch.

“I’m supposed to be delivering pizza’s around the lovely little town of Derry in less than five minutes. I’m going to be so late!”

“Oh well,” Beverly said. “Just blame it on traffic.”

“Oh, great idea!” Richie was still fumbling with the laces on his shoes, his shoelaces somehow very confusing. He glanced up to fix Beverly with a look. “Hey, boss, don’t mind me. Just ran into some traffic on the way over, you know Derry, the roads are always packed out there!”

“Tractor crossing,” Beverly shrugged.

“Is that who gave me all the weed?” Richie asked rhetorically, and Beverly’s eyes widened.

“Oh shit,”

“Yeah, exactly, *oh shit*,” Richie grumbled. “I can’t get fired, my dad will fucking kill me.”

“Just call out!”

“Somebody’s gotta pay the bills, Bev,” Richie used his middle-aged father of three Voice, attempting to school his features, too.

“Shut the fuck up! I called out two weeks ago because you were having an episode!”

“Hey!” Richie squawked. “That was serious!”

“So is this! You can’t drive while you’re high!”

“I’m not that high!”

“It’s just weed,” Aunt Catherine cut in, reminding Richie that she was there at all. “You guys couldn’t have smoked that much; there wasn’t even enough left to get that high.”

“Thank god for you, Cece,” Richie blew her a kiss, to which she laughed. Bev’s aunt was his favorite.

“Anytime, Rich,” she laughed. “Now if you’ll both excuse me, I’m going to mix a cocktail and finish that painting I’ve been working on.”

They both bid Aunt Catherine their goodbyes, before Beverly settled back into the couch. The blunt was almost finished, but Beverly took advantage of another hit. Her eyelids fluttered shut and she held the smoke in her lungs for several seconds.

“You’ve gotta come with me, Bev,” Richie cut into the quiet, finally having tied his laces.

Her eyes flew open. “No way. Today’s my day off.”

“I need you!” Richie whined. “I’m way too high to do this myself!”

“Cece said you’d be fine.” Beverly took another hit.

“Beverly, please, I’ll fucking pay you.”

“I want fifty percent of your tips,” she sat back up.

“Deal! Now get the fuck up!”

The pair scrambled to gather their things; Bev grabbed her jean jacket, Richie his visor and keys. They raced across town in record speed. Richie couldn’t be late; his attendance had been nearly perfect so far. He didn’t want to break that streak so early on.

Bev had her head leaning back against the headrest, her sunglasses hanging low on her nose. Richie was surprised they didn’t fall off; but damn if she didn’t look badass.

“Stay here,” Richie said.

“Where would I go?” Was Bev’s sassy reply. Richie loved a high Bev, but he couldn’t even appreciate it like this.

Richie realized later that he was much higher than he had originally thought. They were already onto their third delivery of the night, though Richie had no idea how they’d made it that far. His mind was foggy, and his movements were slow. If asked by his manager, he’d just claim he was tired, since he was usually delivering at a much quicker pace.

He remembered the night in random bursts.

(Like how terrible of a navigator Beverly was.)

It wasn’t easy to navigate a map of Derry and find the little street names printed against the glossy paper. But their current mental state made it even worse. Bev was nauseous, as she was easily car sick. It had seemed like an okay idea at the time, but now Richie was seriously regretting having put her in charge of reading the map.

“Um, so Gillmore Street should be the next left turn?” Bev fumbled, mouth slowly forming the words, as if the turn wasn’t in five feet. Richie turned the wheel quickly, the pizza bag sliding around in the back.

“Hey, be careful!” Beverly shouted. “I don’t wanna die tonight!”

“Then you gotta tell me to turn like way earlier!” Richie argued. “You’re a terrible navigator.”

“Well you’re a terrible left-turner!”

“Well I have no idea where I’m driving to, so please do your job and read the map.”

Beverly just harrumphed and turned back to the large, haphazardly folded paper in her lap. “I don’t get it,” she whined.

“Well can you please figure it out?” Richie knew he sounded desperate, but he was about to meet a fork in the road and there was someone behind them.

“What do you think I’ve been doing?” Beverly looked up from the map to fix him with a trademark Beverly *look*.

Richie groaned. “The map, Beverly! Look at the map!”

(Or how Beverly tried to follow him up to the doorstep of a customer.)

Richie slowly walked away from his car, large pizza’s in his grasp.

“Richie, *wait*,” Richie spun around to find Beverly attempting to stand. The passenger side door was pushed open as far as it went, and Beverly had both hands grasped against the top of it. “I can’t get up,”

“No, you need to stay there!” Richie swung his arm lamely. “Stay in the car!”

“But you said you needed my help!” Bev argued.

“Not like this!”

“Oh thank god,” she slid back into her seat, pulling the door shut behind her. He watched her adjust her sunglasses again, applying chapstick to her naturally cherry red lips.

(Or how she tried to follow him up the doorstep of a customer; *again*.)

Richie jumped, flinging his body against the brick wall of the home he stood in front of. He’d heard a rustling in the bushes, and his heart rate had accelerated. His thoughts immediately went to (*werewolves, clowns, children with missing torsos*) nothing he had the time to think about. He pushed new thoughts into his mind—a dog, a cat, a really massive grasshopper. Slowly, he turned his head to catch a glimpse of

“Bev?!” his best friend was scrambling to climb out of the bushes, her hair wild and her face scratched up. He swore he saw blood beading at her wrist. She’d followed him again.

“Help me,” she groaned.

“Stay there,” Richie hissed at her, as he heard footsteps getting closer and closer. “Don’t let them see you! I’ll help you out after,”

Just then the front door swung open. Richie politely engaged in the transaction, waiting impatiently for the door to close once more. As soon as it did, he jumped down the two concrete steps and wrapped both of his arms around Beverly’s middle. She wrapped her own arms around his neck, and together they stumbled to get her to her feet. She looked dazed as she winced.

“I think I rolled my ankle,” she whined. “It’s swelling, I think.”

“I should’ve left you *home*,” Richie whined back, walking Beverly back towards the car. “Or at least locked your door.”

“Hey!” Beverly squawked. “I wanted to stay home! You wouldn’t let me.”

“I thought I was going to be the hot mess, but...” he let his voice trail off, gesturing at her.

“Fuck you!”

(Or how Beverly gave a new meaning to the term *littering*.)

The pair continued along their trek. Richie’s eyes were becoming heavy, his mind and body too relaxed for the task at hand. Even the loud, head-banging music wasn’t enough.

“Pull over!” Bev’s voice was suddenly loud.

“What?!” Richie whipped over to look at her.

“I said pull the fuck over! Now!”

Richie did as she asked, quickly pulling to the side of the road, right in front of somebody’s house. He had no idea what neighborhood they were in, but it didn’t seem to matter as he turned to look Bev over. Hastily, she threw open the door and leaned out to vomit into the stranger’s yard. Richie’s first thought was, ‘*guess she wasn’t lying about how nauseous she was*’.

“Fuck! I didn’t know you were that car sick, Lil’ Red.”

“Shut *up*,” Beverly groaned, before the sound of her retching resumed. Richie had to plug his nose against the horrible smell. He wondered if the pizzas were still sanitary.

High Richie had no filters, so the words came tumbling out, “That smells fucking *horrible*, Molly,” Richie used the nickname he’d given her that summer they first met. “And I’m pretty sure we can’t deliver these pizzas now.”

“Richie, for gods fucking sake,” she groaned. Richie could hear her dry-heaving. She was still bent in half, one hand on the car door, the other against her stomach.

“We should probably go before the owner of that house comes

outside,”

Beverly groaned, leaning up slightly. “Yeah, you’re probably right,”

In the end, they’d only finished half of his shift before he told his manager he was feeling particularly nauseous. The manager had agreed that it would be unsanitary to deliver pizzas under such conditions.

“Now I’ve just got to make an extra saucy delivery,” Richie said as he drove back to Beverly’s aunts rental.

“Is that supposed to be a joke about me? If so, I’m not laughing and it’s stupid.”

5

Another day, another Loser who needed a ride across town. Mike at least had a little shitty pick up truck, but it was currently out of commission. Mike could fix it, but he was waiting on a part to come in the mail. And Richie owed Stan a favor, and Mike was one of his favorite people ever, which was why Richie was on his way from the Hanlon farm clear outside Derry city limits, attempting to deliver Mike to Stan’s house for the night. A one-sided pining sleepover paired with a science project. The best and the worst, Richie thought. Kind of like the current moment.

Mike was cursing, reaching up to cover his face with his hands. “This can’t be happening!”

“Um, do I want to ask?” Richie asked, slowing the car to a stop. A herd of cows were currently blocking the way, making it impossible to pass. “Should they be right there, Mikey?”

“Fuck no,” Mike sighed. “They got out somehow.”

“Well can you tell them to skedaddle along?”

“No?!” Mike turned to give him an incredulous look. Richie just shrugged. “Just give me a minute. I gotta see what happened.”

Mike threw open the passenger door, jumping out on the road. Richie couldn’t make out the words Mike was saying, but when none of the cows moved, Richie’s concern rose. What would they do if they couldn’t get by?

Mike jogged away from the car and out into the vast farmland that went out in every direction. Richie rolled down his window as quickly as he could, screaming into the evening, “Where the fuck are you going?!”

If Mike heard, he didn’t give any acknowledgement.

“Well fuck,” Richie whined, knowing that things were only about to get much worse.

He fiddled with the radio, but he couldn’t get a good signal out on the Hanlon farm. Instead, he would have to pick a tape. It wouldn’t be too hard, as he had shoved as many as he possibly could into the middle console and the glove compartment. He fished out a mixtape with the title *songs to get drunk to* and popped it into the tape deck. Which was when Mike reappeared.

“The fence broke,” Mike said, eyes full of concern. “They must’ve found a weak spot and shimmied their way out.”

“Okay?” Richie gave a *so what* look.

“So I gotta fix the fence,” Mike answered.

“Fuck no! Not right now at least.”

“We can’t leave them!” Mike insisted. He was so earnest; Richie couldn’t deny him.

“I can’t be late, Mike,” Richie said. “Like, *really* can’t be late.”

“This will only take a second,” Mike promised. “Come on, Richie, they need us.”

“Don’t try and guilt trip me!” Richie cried. “I love all the cows, but I still gotta drive clear across town, drop you off at Stanley’s and get to my shift,” Richie counted each one off on his fingers, pushing them down one by one.

“Don’t take me to Stan’s! I can ride along with you to buy us time.” Mike’s earnestness was convincing. Richie didn’t have a good argument.

“Fine!” Richie whined when Mike cheered. “But this better be fast.”

“Get out, you can help me,” Mike instructed, and Richie followed. He pulled the keys out of the ignition and jumped out of his car and onto the dirt road.

“Okay, so I’ve got to fix the fence and you can try and corral the cows back into their pasture.”

“Alright,” Richie nodded.

“Can I take your car back up the shed to get a toolbox?”

“Um,” Richie shifted his weight from foot to foot. How much longer could this little project take? “You have to hurry, Mike.” Richie said by way of answer, handing over his keys.

Mike slipped into the driver side, started the car and began to back up. Which was when Richie realized what exactly was going on.

“I don’t want to be left alone!” Richie knew he sounded desperate, but he couldn’t help it. Mike just waved at him, as if to say, ‘*Fuck you, Richie*’.

Richie turned to face the cows again, though they had hardly moved at all. Richie suddenly wished he had a cowboy hat and a big bronze belt buckle. If he didn’t know how to do it, at least he could look like he did. Did cows respect cowboy boots, or did they feel they were as ugly as Richie knew they were?

“Okay, guys,” Richie huffed. “Come on, I know you want to come back inside!” Not one cow budged.

Fuck, Richie thought. Now he wished he had a lasso and maybe a horse.

“There’s tasty— oh fuck, what do cows even eat?” Richie couldn’t picture ever having seen a cow eat. “You guys meet eaters? No? On a diet?”

Richie squinted out into the distance, but he couldn’t see Mike coming back yet.

He stared at the cows for a minute or so longer before another idea struck. He took a deep breath and then,

“MOO!” He hollered as loudly as he could, waving his hands towards the pasture. They blinked at him, Richie could tell, but nothing more. One leaned down to graze at the grass. “Shit,” he mumbled. That had seemed like his last great idea.

He jumped in place several times, pointing exaggeratedly at the way Mike had disappeared.

Could he make the cows chase him? Was that really the best idea? Did he honestly want a herd of cows stampeding towards him?

“I’ll bring you guys back a pizza,” Richie said, more to fill the silence. The cows didn’t seem to give a shit about what he had to say.

Richie paced in place, unable to stand still. There had to be some other way. What would Mike do? Or Bill? How did those two always have an idea for these kind of predicaments? Also, Mike owed him big time.

Staring off into the distance, Richie’s eyes tracked the farm he had come to learn and love. It was a safe place outside of Derry; an endless space to be whoever you wanted to be. Mike had always made that clear; the farm was their refuge. The farm was a place they could come to when the rest of Derry was shitty. It was like some picturesque postcard that promised tranquility or some shit.

“That’s it!” Richie cheered to himself, finally coming to another idea.

Richie skipped over to stand in the path the cows needed to follow.

This was it. His big moment.

He cleared his throat before, “*Home, home on the range*,” he gestured towards the large expanse of land behind him; begging the cows to go explore the place they called home. He wasn’t sure what lyrics came next, so he just sang what he knew, “*Where the deer and the antelope play, where seldom is heard a discouraging word and the skies are not cloudy all day.*” He sang in his best cowboy twang, allowing the words to develop as he opened his mouth wide.

Several cows turned to look at him, but not even one budged. He’d have to up his antics. He began jumping in place, screaming the lyrics this time, “*Home, home on the range!*”

“What a beautiful rendition,” Richie hadn’t heard his car pull up, until Mike stuck his head out the window.

“Fuck you!” Richie responded. “I’m not a fucking cowboy! How the fuck are you supposed to herd a bunch of assholes?!”

A cow made a noise at that, a low noise that sounded like a ‘moo’.

“You respond to trash talk?” Richie laughed. “Come on you fuckers, go back to your fucking ugly pasture!”

“You don’t have to be so mean,” Mike chided. “It doesn’t look like they’re going to cooperate. Can you run up to the farmhouse and get my grandfather?”

“You’re kidding, right?” Richie stared at him dumbly.

“No! It’s getting dark, so I’ll need your headlights to mend the fence. You can get my grandfather and when the two of you get back, we can go while he herds the cows.”

Richie wasn’t sure how to respond. He stared at Mike dumbly, allowing his mind to whirl through half-baked ideas. What other plan was there?

“Fuck you,” Richie grumbled, heading off onto the dusty dirt road that led to the Hanlon’s farmhouse. They were far enough that it was only a little dot in the distance. Richie sort of wanted to cry.

Instead, he ran. His lungs burned and his throat was drier than it ever had been, and yet he continued to run. He tripped over a rock and nearly faceplanted. He somehow was able to catch himself before he skid across the dirt road. He held a hand against his glasses, so they didn't fall off. He didn't really want to come home with broken glasses and a kooky story about tripping while running a couple hundred feet across a farm. Especially if he came back fired from his job.

He gained a new appreciation for Eddie as he ran. His knee hurt, and he was pretty sure he rolled his ankle. Running was kind of the worst. But somehow Richie pressed on until he was banging on the front door of the farmhouse. He figured it wasn't polite to barge in, as he already wasn't Mr. Hanlon's favorite person.

"Richie?!" Mr. Hanlon threw open the front door.

"Um, yeah, hi," Richie smiled awkwardly. "There's a bit of a predicament going on down by the cow pasture."

Much, much later, Richie finally turned into the Uris' driveway. Their lovely little yellow brick-home stood with it's perfectly manicured lawn and flower beds. Richie had begun to think they'd never make it. As if he were doomed to deliver pizza's and herd cows through the rest of the millennia. Mike's tired, gentle smile told Richie he felt the same way.

Richie's turn was a little wonky, though he didn't drive over the Uris' coifed lawn, so he counted it as a win.

"Thanks, Richie, I couldn't have done tonight without you." Mike clapped him on the shoulder, like Richie had seen him do to his football pals a hundred times. Richie didn't want to admit that the force of it kind of hurt.

"Yeah, yeah, y'know I do charge for my services." Richie teased, putting on a businessman Voice.

"Oh yeah?" Mike's smile grew. "And what services did I hire out for

tonight?”

Richie’s mouth dropped. “Hey!”

Mike just laughed, before pushing open the passenger side door. Richie pulled the keys out of the ignition and followed Mike’s lead.

They only knocked twice before Stan appeared at the door. He was wrapped in a blue cotton robe, the middle tied shut with a perfect bow. Not a curl was out of place and his feet were shoved into a pair of identical blue slippers.

“What happened to you two?” Stan asked all at once, words tumbling out of his mouth. Richie could feel his anxious energy.

“We were running behind,” Mike answered. “So I had to go on Richie’s run with him.”

“You’re kidding me?” Stan looked the pair up and down. His nose was wrinkled, eyes sparkling in that way they always seemed to do when he was about to jump into an *‘I told you so’* rant. “What happened to the responsibility you promised your dad, Richie?”

“God, of course you remember that,” Richie grumbled. “Also! Also, it wasn’t my fault. Just ask Mike!”

Stan turned his glare to Mike, though it visibly softened. Richie almost wanted to laugh, but knew that might be a little rude.

“It’s true,” Mike nodded. “The cow pasture fence broke. I had to repair the fence and Richie had to herd the cows.”

“Richie herded cows?” Stan looked skeptical.

“Yes, Stanley, I did.”

“Well, he tried his best,” Mike said, and although there wasn’t a hint of condescension in his voice, Stan still snickered.

“I’m not a fucking cowboy!” Richie said for what felt like the tenth time that night. “How would I know how to herd a bunch of fucking cows?! Also, might I add, Cyndi Lauper was wrong,” Richie said.

“Girls just wanna have fun?! Hell no! Cows just want to have fun.”

Mike laughed, a deep belly laugh, leaving Richie pleased. Stan smiled, shaking his head fondly.

“Well, anyway, Mike’s brave. Unlike the rest of you Losers, I would never go for a pizza delivery run with Richie.” Stan said.

Richie scoffed. “What’s the supposed to mean, Staniel?!”

“Your car is disgusting, I hate the smell of pizza, and I don’t have time to do your job with you.” Stan said loftily.

“Whoa, you fucking sweet talker. You tryin’ to get into my pants?” Richie said dryly.

“In your dreams, Trashmouth.”

“I’m counting on it,” Richie leered, rolling his eyes all the while. “If you two don’t mind, I’d like to go home now.”

“Have a good night, Richie,” Mike wrapped his arm around him in what Richie had come to learn was called a ‘*bro hug*’. Richie wasn’t sure if he really liked them or not.

“Yeah, drive safe, Rich,” Stan said.

Richie waved as he walked down the front stoop and back to his car.

+ 1

Sometimes, Richie thought, things just seemed to work out perfectly. It was a slow Tuesday evening pizza delivering and he’d even made it out to the far side of town in record speed. He wasn’t expected back at the parlor for another twenty minutes, which was plenty of time to pull over and make out. Convincing Eddie, though, could be hit or miss.

Luckily for Richie, he’d agreed easily, tongue darting out to lick his lips.

Everything happened quickly. Richie pulled over on a deserted road, turned the car off, and turned to face Eddie. Although Eddie was no longer in the passenger seat. Richie could only see Eddie's ass as he climbed between the front seats and into the back. As if on instinct, Richie reached over to playfully smack at Eddie's ass. Eddie's answering whimper was too much for Richie.

Richie crawled after him. He contorted his shoulders, shimmied his waist, and somehow managed to make it into the back of his car. He fell gracelessly, left foot somehow ending up in Eddie's lap, his head bashing against the window. Eddie gave a little, tinkering laugh. The soft, sweet sound of it set Richie's stomach on fire.

Scrambling to sit up, Richie pulled himself back onto the bench. It was quite the task to fold his legs beneath himself and lean towards Eddie's eager lips. His eyes were twinkling, even in the low light. Richie was eager, too. With practiced ease, Richie placed both of his hands against Eddie's cheeks and pulled him close. Eddie fell forward, their lips meeting in an enthusiastic, bruising collision.

Richie closed his eyes, moving with just muscle memory. Kissing Eddie was a reflex. Fingers played with the short curls at the nape of Eddie's neck, knees pressing against Eddie's legs, nose slotted against the side slope of Eddie's own.

Their lips slid together, mouths opening and closing. Eddie's tongue darted out, licking at Richie's own. Warmth and wetness and the familiar press of skin.

Eddie was pure heat. Richie leaned further and further into it, until his brain was mushy. From there, Richie's world was nothing more than the world they created and shared.

Until Eddie pulled away suddenly, body going rigid.

“What?!” Richie reached up to adjust his glasses, as they'd slipped down his nose.

“Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god!” Eddie chanted in terror.

“What?!” Richie repeated, glancing around to find the source of

Eddie's madness.

"Richie! Look at the fucking clock."

Fucking clock, indeed, Richie thought. "Shit! Fuck!"

Richie threw open the door of the backseat, not even waiting for Eddie to move back to the front before he started the car and turned it back onto the main road. Richie could hear Eddie buckling his seatbelt, but he paid him no mind.

His mind was a whirlwind of thoughts like, '*I'm so fired*' and '*my dad is going to kill me*' and '*no more nice, hot dates for me*'.

"You're going to lose your fucking job!" Eddie echoed back Richie's exact thoughts. "You've always got the worst ideas! And I just always blindly trust you!"

"You didn't disagree!" Richie squawked.

"Yeah, I know! That's what blindly trusting you means, dipshit!"

"And what do you mean, I *always* have the worst ideas?"

"You just do!"

"Okay, like what?!" Richie asked.

"Um, where do you want me to start?! What about last month when you caught that frog and wanted to freak Ben out? But it escaped and jumped into Stan's hair? And I was your stupid little helper so Stan ignored me for thirty-six hours!"

"Okay, so one time! And how was I supposed to know frogs were that fucking slippery?!"

"Or what about the time," Eddie continued, completely unphased by Richie's rebuttal. "last fall when you got us both in detention because of your paper airplanes?"

"That's not the way I remember it." Richie shook his head.

“Well that’s the way it happened.” Eddie insisted. “Or when you wanted to have sex when your parents were having that stupid fucking get together with all of their snooty friends?!”

“My dad came upstairs because of *your* high-pitched moaning, gumdrop, not mine!”

“Don’t call me cute sugary pet-names when I’m mad at you!” Richie watched as Eddie tried to fight off a smile.

“Ha! You’re not really mad!”

“I’m fucking stressed!”

“Slow your roll, Eddie baby,” Richie said. “It’ll be fine.” Although Richie wasn’t sure he actually believed that. “It’s my job on the line, anyway, not yours.”

“Whatever,” Eddie grumbled, which was just code for, *‘I don’t want to share the thoughts currently in my anxiety ridden brain’*.

Richie pulled into the parking lot just then, eyes bulging at the sight that met him.

“Shit! That’s my boss’ car! It’s a fucking Tuesday, what the hell is he doing here?!”

“Are you kidding me?!” Eddie’s voice was up an octave, no doubt laced in hysteria.

“You gotta get down, Eds,” Richie pleaded. “If he sees you, I’m so fired.”

“What did I fucking tell you?!” Eddie jumped back into his spiel, as if he had been waiting for the best opportunity to start again. He did duck, though, attempting to hide behind the passenger seat. Richie wished Mike’s blanket was still in the back so he could throw it over Eddie’s body.

“We’re so lucky you’re so tiny and compact,” Richie said, before he could stop himself. Now really wasn’t the time to get Eddie going off about his size.

“Richie, are you kidding me?! No, really?!” Richie couldn’t see his face, but he could hear the rambling of his voice. “You know I’m not really *that* short, and it’s actually really great for the races I run in-”

Richie didn’t wait to hear the rest of the monologue he could recite alongside Eddie. Usually it was cute, but Richie was pretty sure he was about to shit his pants. No amount of false confidence could save him now.

He adjusted the brim of the visor he had to wear as part of his uniform and slid through the glass door of the pizza parlor. The bell above it rang, alerting the parlor of his arrival.

“Richie, thank god you’re here. Did something happen?!” His boss’ booming voice immediately filled the parlor. The few customers that sat around the checkered tables looked up, and Richie sort of wanted to sink into the floor. This was not the kind of attention he craved.

“Um, yeah, I got lost.” Richie bullshitted, wincing at how stupid it sounded.

“Lost?! Didn’t you grow up here?”

“Uh, yeah, but I’d never been to that part of town. Took a wrong turn on the way back. I got totally turned around,” Richie breezed, crossing his fingers behind his back.

“Hm,” his boss squinted his eyes. “Well we got two complaint calls. The pizzas were being delivered late and cold because we were down a delivery man for twenty minutes.”

“I’m sorry,” Richie said easily. “I swear it won’t happen again.”

“Alright,” his boss nodded. “You’ll have to prove it, Richie. Consider this your warning.”

“Yeah, of course, thanks,” Richie wiped his sweaty palms against his black jeans, tugging on the hem of his t-shirt in the process.

Richie grabbed the next round of pizzas, slipped them into his insulated carrying case and went back through the ringing door. Once outside he let out a breath of relief, closing his eyes. He

fumbled towards his car.

“What happened?!” Eddie demanded as soon as Richie climbed back into his car. Eddie began trying to get back up when Richie reached out and shoved his head back down. “Owe! What the fuck, Richie?!”

“Just wait a second,” Richie hissed, switching the car into reverse.

“Um, fuck no! Do you know what could happen if we were in an accident? I’d probably die on impact! Or break my spine and probably my collarbone, too!”

“I just need to pull away,” Richie tried to reason, knowing that he was being ridiculous. Eddie’s life was more important than a pizza delivery job, but there was no one on the road as far as the eye could see; Eddie would be fine.

Silence enveloped the car until Richie turned a corner, the car now out of sight of the parlor.

“You can get up,” Richie said. Eddie didn’t waste a second, immediately sitting back up and buckling his seatbelt.

“This has probably got to stop, at least for a little while.” Richie said, regretting it even as he said it. Bringing Eddie along was his favorite.

“If you would’ve just been more aware of the time-”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, Richie’s irresponsible and stupid, I get it.”

“That’s not *even* what I was saying,” Eddie stressed his words. Richie could feel his glare. “You know I don’t think either of those things about you.”

“Whatever,” Richie said.

“What the fuck, Richie?!” Eddie whined. “No, seriously!”

“I said ‘whatever’,” Richie said, a bit firmer this time. He just wanted to deliver pizzas and be done for the night. Discussing everything wasn’t on his to do list. Sure, he’d dug this grave, but he wasn’t interested in climbing in with Eddie.

“Don’t be so fucking difficult, Richie, god,”

Richie didn’t respond. He didn’t really have anything to add. He’d made his moody remark, and he wasn’t interested in elaborating.

“Richie,” Eddie pressed.

Richie ignored once more.

“Fuck, you’re so stubborn.” Eddie sighed. “Fine, don’t talk but you have to listen. I don’t think your irresponsible or whatever other dumb shit you’re thinking right now. I was anxious and I shouldn’t have said any of that.” Eddie’s voice was full of a tenderness he rarely showed. In the rearview mirror, Richie watched as Eddie attempted to make eye contact. His caramel colored eyes were full of a love Richie so desperately craved.

“Yeah, okay,” Richie mumbled.

“I promise, okay, Rich?”

“Yeah?”

“Apple-solutely,” Eddie smiled around the little joke he’d loved since the fifth grade.

“You’re fucking adorable,” Richie smiled back.

“Nope, you are,” Eddie shot back, just as Richie hollered,

“You are!”

“Jinx, you owe me an orgasm,” Richie snapped at Eddie, who burst into giggles.

“If I have to,” Eddie pretended to be put out, but Richie saw right through him.

Eddie was a hundred and one emotions all rolled up into a short adorable human. But Richie wouldn’t have had him any other way.

“Is that a promise?” Richie asked, a hint of teasing in his voice.

“You can count on it.”

Author's Note:

A couple of housekeeping notes:

1. An over emotional Eddie who is too upset to say a proper goodbye to Richie only to just cave and follow him out? Totally something I've done.
2. Being a clingy lover doesn't have to be a bad thing. It's okay to want to spend time with the person you love!
3. The game that Bill and Richie play was a game that Louis Tomlinson and Zayn Malik would play on tour. Especially during the Take Me Home era (late 2012-2013) I tried to find the interview where they talk about the game, but I couldn't find it.
4. All ideas for Mike's part of this story were planned out by my girlfriend. I would link her but she doesn't write. So, just a shout out to my brilliant girl!

I hope this was fun to read! My girlfriend and I certainly loved planning this story out. Let me know what you think! Which was your favorite part? Eddie purposefully stalling after track practice?! Bev and Richie delivering high?! Richie attempting to corral cows?! Getting caught with Eddie?! I'd love to know! It is my birthday today, and a comment would be the very best present.

Also, let's be friends! Come and chat with my on tumblr @ eddiekasbrak-lesbian!